

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, January 6, 2015

9 – 11 a.m.

Room 319 City Hall

Meeting 3 Notes

Committee members present: Brenda Bell-Brown, Leonard Bonacci, Sean Broom, Hilary Dvorak, Tom Evers, Michael Hagen, Jeni Hager, Cyndi Harper, Jeff Johnson, Dan Kenney, Lance Knuckles, Doug Kress, Chris Linde, Tom Loftus, Bob Loken, Patrick Sadler, Abdi Salah, Ben Shardlow, Sarah Stewart, Rory Stierler

[Please see [website](#) for Technical Advisory Committee Member affiliations]

Committee members excused: Kathleen Boe, Jessica Galatz, Peter MacDonagh, Jesse Osendorf, Heidi Ritchie, Cathy Polasky, Jody Rader, Susan Segal, Alene Tchourumoff, Melvin Tennant

Guests: Adam Arvidson; David Knoll sitting in for Melvin Tennant; Nick Ngo, Andrea Wedul, Kestrel Design Group, sitting in for Peter MacDonagh; D. Craig Taylor

Staff/consultants present: Lydia Major, Kjersti Monson, Colleen O'Dell, Tyler Pederson, Jody Rader, Jennifer Ringold, Rattana Sengsoulichanh, Lacy Shelby, Marsha Wagner

1. Welcome/Introductions of New Participants

Meeting 3 of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was called to order at 9:06 a.m. by Kjersti Monson, Director, Long Range Planning, City of Minneapolis Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED). After inviting new TAC members to introduce themselves, she turned the meeting over to Lacy Shelby, Principal Urban Designer, Minneapolis CPED, and Colleen O'Dell, Planner, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB).

2. Report on Small Group and Take-Home Exercises from TAC Meeting 2

Shelby thanked committee members for their responses about their favorite spaces, programs and activities. Colleen reported that a number of great ideas, concepts and themes were submitted, i.e.: Rice Park, St. Paul; The Forks, Winnipeg, Canada; Freeway Park, Seattle; Granville Island and Commercial Broadway Station, Vancouver, Canada; North End Parks and Rose Kennedy Greenway, Boston; Millennium Park, Chicago; Pioneer Courthouse Square, Portland; moveable furniture; Food Truck Park, Austin, TX; Indianapolis Cultural Trail, Indianapolis; Tuileries Gardens, Paris; Green space, Minneapolis; and Concert on the Square, Madison. [photos, [PPT Pages 4-5](#)].

TAC member submissions brought up the following recurring themes:

- Activity in all seasons—winter, summer, year-round
- Green space and plaza space for a variety of activities
- Small and large spaces—people like surprising little alcoves as well as central, large civic space
- Furnishings and different elements that can be moved around
- Vibrant and active, both day and night
- Water played an important role, especially in creating playful, family-friendly spaces to draw people downtown
- Food and music
- The arts
- Transit connections, so people can access these spaces in a variety of ways

In terms of why TAC members thought these spaces would be right for Minneapolis, the following criteria were indicated [[PPT Pages 6-8](#)]:

- Vibrant, centrally located, and accessible green spaces and plazas to accommodate a lot of activity but also quiet spaces
- Fun, energetic, and whimsical elements in parks/places, including movable furniture and public art, engage people in a playful manner
- Vegetation and water features bring nature into the city and mask city noise
- Bike/pedestrian trails (accessibility and connectivity) that incorporate arts and recreation reflect the City's culture
- Public gardens, seasonal activities, concerts, public markets and shops attract people year-round
- Food trucks encourage entrepreneurial spirit and provide places for people to eat and share ideas
- Urban parks create backyard for downtown residents
- Public gathering spaces and river recreation opportunities (including canoe/kayak rentals and water taxis) connect people to the riverfront
- Vibrant transit hubs with food, stores, and coffee shops encourage use of transit
- Small scale parks located near vibrant, populated landmarks ensure foot traffic and year-round activity

Things that need to change in order to bring this about include [[PPT Page 9](#)]:

- An organization that programs space in downtown Minneapolis
- Park Board or City may need to acquire prime downtown real estate
- Strategy for maintenance of public amenities, such as movable furniture
- Balance of hardscape and vegetation to support programming
- Look to precedents for successful examples
- Leverage existing projects to incorporate new ideas
- Creativity and risk-taking on all levels of planning

3. Update on Community Engagement Plan

Jennifer Ringold, Director of Strategic Planning, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), also thanked TAC members for their involvement and enthusiasm for the project. Reporting on how the data being collected at these meetings is being used, Jennifer said that the tremendous amount of information provided by the TAC and Steering Committee (SC) regarding groups to target and include in this project is being distilled into a community engagement plan. This will be a key topic at the next meeting, and will include goals about why and when to engage people, and also define targets to ensure equal representation and a balanced range of information.

4. Report on Steering Committee Meeting 1

Jennifer said that the first SC meeting brought together a very energized group that contains a wide range of individuals involved, i.e. people who have extensive experience serving on steering committees and others who are doing so for the first time, and who represent a diverse range of entities from City of Skate (skateboarders) to individuals who are long-established business leaders. The SC agenda was similar to that of TAC: data practices, overview of the project, their role in this process, the relationship between the two committees, and collection of data for community engagement. SC meetings also include a public comment opportunity. The format for the next meeting (January 15, 2015) will be similar to this meeting.

5. Small Group Exercise Preparation: Mapping What's Meaningful

By way of transitioning into the next agenda item, Kjersti said that information would be presented to describe the anticipated result of the exercise, which is to evaluate whether the priority corridors and

destinations identified and mapped in policy downtown ring true, or whether there is some refinement needed. Terms such as standard versus enhanced streets will be defined.

- **Park Assessment.** Lydia Major, Landscape Architect, LHB, gave an update on the parks assessment. The MPRB has engaged a consultant to look at elements in all of the parks that are being incorporated in the Downtown Service Area Master Plan and the South Service Area Master Plan. They have gathered information on the following items in the interest of better understanding their assets and current state [[PPT Page 12](#)]:
 - Athletic fields and courts (baseball, basketball, handball, horseshoe, shuffleboard, soccer, tennis, volleyball)
 - Furniture (benches, bike racks, charcoal grills, game tables, trash bins, drinking fountains, picnic tables)
 - Signage and lighting
 - Playgrounds and workout equipment
 - Building structures
 - Dog parks
 - Skate-parks

A condition assessment has been incorporated, and MPRB will be engaging its maintenance staff to review the condition assessment and determine where they stand in terms of the elements listed above.

- **Definition of City Standard Street vs. “Enhancement.”** Shelby referenced discussions from previous meetings about existing amenities that are in the current streetscape, mentioning that approximately 2,800 data points have been collected. Staff has been working to identify what the features are, what makes up a standard street in downtown, and what enhanced or add-on elements could look like. Existing and enhanced elements have been depicted in several categories [[PPT Pages 13-15](#)]:
 - Lighting: could be more artistic and contemporary
 - Wayfinding/signage: whether it be done now or in a Phase II
 - Seating: current Downtown seating is lacking in design and placement
 - Bike racks: more is needed, different types in different areas
 - Surfaces: materials and custom patterns
 - Green infrastructure: a lot goes unnoticed; what additional types could be envisioned
 - Street trees/plantings
 - Trash/recycling: more cohesive vision for design
 - Public art: interactive, multi-sensory

Kjersti said that mechanisms for delivering enhancements will be explored in future phases of work, including consideration of partnerships that may not currently be in place.

- **Downtown Minneapolis Corridors, Destinations, & Placemaking.** Kjersti explained that the focus of today’s exercise will not be on the pragmatics of how enhancements are paid for and maintained, but rather on establishing a common sense of what needs doing, including getting to a common vision of priority corridors and destinations. TAC members were asked to think about themes and programs that give places meaning: mobility and access, wayfinding, commerce, social gathering, events and programming, play and recreation, urban agriculture, green infrastructure, and image and identity of the City. [[PPT Page 16](#)]

Placemaking includes consideration of many factors: global competitiveness, tourism, transportation planning, housing, community development, and others. Although the focus of this

plan is on the public realm, placemaking is really about how public realm elements enhance other urban characteristics like global competitiveness, public health, livability and so on, and vice versa. In the best case scenario, placemaking contributes to all of those things and those things contribute to placemaking. [[PPT Page 17](#)]

“Paths and places” is a landscape architect’s phrase that is used to describe meaningful destinations and qualitative corridors in a city. This group will discuss meaningful corridors: what features and places give our corridors definition, and what activities will therefore take place there. Kjersti showed several slides depicting current paths and places, i.e. Nicollet Mall for shopping, the Riverfront because of a natural feature, Fifth Street for LRT and large gathering venues. [[PPT Pages 18-21](#)]

Examples of existing or proposed “paths and places” include the Zombie Pub Crawl area in the Warehouse District, Loring Greenway, Nicollet Mall, LRT station, St. Anthony Falls [[PPT Page 22](#)].

There are four core, fundamental elements that will be used in the mapping exercise [[PPT Pages 23-24](#)]:

- Corridors: event/activity, arts and cultural, arrival
- Districts: venue, shopping/dining, character, amenity
- Happenings (events): farmers markets, civic gatherings, street or district, big venue
- Parks and landmarks: important buildings, parks, iconic features, views

Jennifer added that in addition to identifying features, they want to also glean information about existing relationships to the parks within the Downtown area. Understanding that parks could fit within each of the identified features, the MPRB is looking for gaps in areas where there should be parks, more opportunities for events or activities, key linkages that are missing or working, and meaningful themes within the parks or a character that is important to the vibrancy of Downtown.

6. Five minute break for workshop setup

7. Small Group Workshop: Mapping Downtown

- **Mapping Methods:** Using a large map with trace overlay, each small group created a map showing these elements, adding new categories and symbols as needed, and creating a legend to define the features represented. Each group designated someone to report back to the others at the end of the allotted time period.
- **Small Group Work** [30 minutes, facilitated by staff and consultants]
- **Group Map Presentations and Discussion**

Group 1: Brenda Bell-Brown, Minneapolis Arts Commission; Leonard Bonacci, Minnesota Sports Facility Authority; Hilary Dvorak, CPED Development Services/Heritage Preservation Commission; Cyndi Harper, Met Transit

- **Connections:** Third Avenue South designated Avenue of the Arts connecting with the Minneapolis Institute of Arts
- **Opportunity:** Starting later this year what is currently Fifth Street exit from I-94 will shift over and become Seventh Street exit and will better connect Cedar Riverside to Downtown (Samatar Crossing)
- **Theaters:** along Hennepin but also near Downtown

- Districts: Medical with Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC), Education with Minneapolis Community and Technical College and University of St. Thomas
- Gap: Warehouse/North Loop missing pedestrian connections (due to trenches, railroad)
- Integrating Downtown with surrounding neighborhoods: public park system hosts celebrations that are representational of diverse communities, i.e. Juneteenth/underground railroad, Caribbean Festival bring cultural vitality and relevance

Group 2: Chris Linde, Minneapolis Bike Advisory Committee; Tom Loftus, Minneapolis Arts Commission; Bob Loken, Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee; Ben Shardlow, Minneapolis Downtown Council; Sarah Stewart, Minneapolis Public Health Advisory Committee; Rory Stierler, National Park Service

- Lots of barriers on edges of downtown.
- No identifying park/gathering spaces, outside of the river.
- Corridors/Gateways: diffuse/no-man’s-land areas behind HCMC, Hennepin Energy Recovery Center, bus depot, low-lying industrial buildings indicate potential opportunities
- Corridors with potential: Washington to Cedar/Riverside; Fifth, Park and Portland as gateways
- Lack of a good corridor (east-west), south of Fifth Street—run into barriers on both sides
- Districts: separated by white space/barriers, not contiguous; wherever you are there should be a district, no “non-space”
- Freeway around Downtown is a barrier to neighborhood areas
- Gateways: lacking on north and west side of Downtown, parking garage by Post Office blocks access to the river

Group 3: Tom Evers, Minneapolis Parks Foundation; Jeni Hager, Minneapolis Public Works; Jeff Johnson, Minneapolis Convention Center/Target Center; Patrick Sadler, CM Goodman Policy Aide; Abdi Salah, CM Warsame Policy Aide

Approached exercise primarily from visitors’ perspective:

- Corridors: Grant Street from Convention Center and plaza, connection to Loring Park and Peavey Plaza (close in proximity but never associated together); First Avenue, Hennepin and Nicollet are distinct but close to each other, not tied together and don’t program together; LRT; Farmers Market is unconnected; Riverfront around Mill Ruins Park/Guthrie/Gold Medal Park and connections across the river; Nicollet Island and Old Main-historic district, great walking neighborhood but disconnected
- Visitors/Guests: Wayfinding for must-see features like the Mississippi River, Mary Tyler Moore statue, Loring Park, Spoon and Cherry, Target Field, First Avenue, Wall of Stars, Vikings stadium and Commons
- Elliot Park: Better pedestrian connection
- University of Minnesota needs connection to Downtown
- Downtown could extend over the river so that the river is the heart of the city, not the border

Group 4: Sean Broom, CM Yang Policy Aide; Mike Hagen, Downtown Skyway Advisory Committee; Dan Kenney, Minnesota Ballpark Authority; Doug Kress, CPED Development Services; Marsha Wagner (Staff)

- Bike and transit corridors (Cedar Lake Trail, Hennepin, First, Fourth and Seventh), Nicollet, Fifth-transit, areas along river-pedestrians
- Food: North Loop, Warehouse District, First Avenue North/Hennepin, terminus of Light Rail
- Destinations/Clusters: Nicollet Island, Stone Arch Bridge/Mill City Museum/Guthrie Theater, Government Plaza, Public Library, Target Field, Farmers Market (not well-connected to

- Downtown), Vikings Stadium, Convention Center, Peavey Plaza, Loring Park, Sculpture Garden/Walker
- Car Corridors: Washington Avenue, Ninth-Eighth-Seventh Streets, Park and Portland Avenues (both cars and bikes)
- Events: Target Field Station, Walker, Loring Park, Mill Ruins and Father Hennepin Parks, Commons for future event space
- Gaps: Better connections to riverfront and areas along the river

Group 5: Dave Knoll, Meet Minneapolis; Lance Knuckles, Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities; Nick Ngo, Minneapolis-NCR; Andrea Wedul, Tree Advisory Commission

- Districts: Riverfront (both north and south, different characteristics), stadium (Vikings stadium, Target Field), warehouse including the North Loop, business, theater along Hennepin, Convention Center
- Corridors: Hennepin Avenue to the river, Washington Avenue for both vehicles and pedestrians, Nicollet Mall for business, Marquette Avenue for food trucks, bike/pedestrian/multi-modal (Cedar Lake trail, riverfront)
- Gaps (where things are broken, not working or could be improved): connecting to river especially from Vikings stadium area, over-constructed areas on the east edge of downtown, subterranean areas/35W trench, Gateway-Hennepin and Nicollet, bridge crossings-Loring Park
- Landmarks: Vikings stadium, Loring Park, Target Field, Nicollet Island, Convention Center
- Existing Corridors Map: thought it was pretty close so didn't do overlay

Shelby explained that the maps would be scanned, notes written up, and information from the maps will be represented in a graphic style for reporting back to the group, showing takeaways side-by-side.

Kjersti thought this was a great exercise with a lot of thoughtful and insightful observation occurring, and a surprising amount of diversity in the observations. Shelby shared her observation from monitoring the groups that there's a connection to the larger city as a whole, and that will inform her process moving forward with continuing work on analysis.

Jennifer announced that the next TAC meeting will be held on February 3, with one of the main topics being the community engagement plan. The next SC meeting will be held January 15.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

This constitutes my understanding of items discussed and decisions reached.

If there are any omissions or discrepancies, please notify the author in writing.

Submitted by:

Marsha Wagner, CastleVisions

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